



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OFFICE
421 Croton Road
Melbourne, FL 32935

Statewide Tornado Drill

Friday, February 15, 2013 at 1010 am through 1030 am EST

Monday, February 11 through Friday, February 15, 2013, has been proclaimed **Severe Weather Awareness Week in Florida** by Governor Rick Scott. During this special week, Floridians are encouraged to learn and review the proper safety precautions necessary for protecting their lives during severe weather. Each day will focus on a specific topic. The topics assigned to each weekday are: Monday – Lightning; Tuesday – Marine Hazards and Rip Currents; Wednesday – Tornadoes and Thunderstorms; Thursday – Hurricanes and Flooding; and Friday – Temperature Extremes and Wildfires.

Severe weather can strike with only a few minutes of advance warning --- do you have a way to receive a warning? The National Weather Service in Melbourne and the Florida Division of Emergency Management encourage you to participate in the annual statewide tornado drill.

General Information: At approximately 1010 am EST on Friday, February 15, all National Weather Service Forecast Offices serving Florida will transmit a practice Tornado Warning. **The warning will be transmitted via NOAA Weather Radio Drill in place of the normal Routine Weekly Test (RWT).** Local Radio and TV stations and Emergency Management offices may also choose to broadcast this warning drill in some areas. The practice Tornado Warning will be cancelled at 1030 am EST. **The drill this year was moved from Wednesday to Friday, due to the threat for isolated severe storms across northern Florida on Wednesday.**

Please note that while the Tornado Warning Drill will trigger an audible alarm on some brands of NOAA Weather Radio, other radios (i.e. Midland WR-100) will only display a yellow advisory light on the console.

The NWS Melbourne Tornado Warning Drill will be issued for the following east central Florida counties: Brevard, Indian River, Lake, Martin, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, St. Lucie, Seminole and Volusia. Additionally, all other Florida counties will receive practice Tornado Warning Drills from their local NWS offices.

For further information, please contact Scott.Spratt@noaa.gov or Bart.Hagemeyer@noaa.gov.

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Statewide Tornado Drill Timeline – February 15, 2013

School districts, private schools, preschools and daycare centers are urged to participate in the drill. The tornado warning will be broadcast on NOAA Alert Radio and will be encoded as a Routine Weekly Test (RWT) for this drill.

Before the drill: Prepare

- Inform staff, students, parents.
- Review and refine a tornado plan.

The day of the drill

After 800 am: Consider a Tornado Watch to be in effect

- Announce watch to staff, students.
- Designate authority (coordinator).
- Evacuate tornado vulnerable areas.

1010 am: Tornado Warning Issued

- Receive message.
- Coordinator determines threat.

1020 am: Tornado Warning remains in effect

- Upon determination of immediate threat, give “take shelter” or “duck and cover” command (depending on space available at location).

1030 am: Termination of Watch and Warning

- Give instructions to return to normal activities. (you will not receive notification. Terminate the drill as you see fit.)

After the Drill Wrap up

- Following the drill, assess and revise plan as needed.

Tornado Watch and Warning Definitions

A TORNADO WATCH is issued when conditions are favorable for a tornado to occur. Be prepared to seek shelter.

A TORNADO WARNING is issued when a tornado has either been sighted in the immediate area or been observed by Doppler radar. Immediately seek safe shelter.

Hazardous Weather Planning

For the latest forecast information concerning Hazardous Weather Threats for East Central Florida: <http://www.srh.weather.gov/mlb/ghwo/ghwomain.php>

Tornado Safety in Florida

If a Tornado Warning is issued for your area or a tornado is sighted...

Take cover immediately. In Florida, the safest tornado shelter is a small windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building, such as an interior bathroom. Mobile home residents should evacuate to the nearest sturdy building or shelter if a tornado threatens. If caught outdoors, seek shelter in sturdy building nearby. If you cannot quickly walk to a shelter, immediately get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt and try to drive to the closest sturdy shelter. If flying debris occurs while you are driving, pull over and park. You now have the following options as a last resort: stay in the car with the seat belt on, put your head down below the windows and protect you head with your hands and a blanket if possible; if you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, exit your car, lie in that area and cover your head with your hands.

Your choice should be driven by your specific circumstances. The important thing to understand is that if you find yourself outside or in a car with a tornado approaching and you are unable to get to a safe shelter, you are at risk from a number of things outside your control, such as the strength and path of the tornado and debris from your surroundings. This is the case whether you stay in your car or seek shelter in a depression or ditch, both of which are considered last resort options that provide little protection.

More tornado safety: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/brochures/tornado.shtml>

National Weather Service and American Red Cross Joint Tornado Safety Statement:
http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/severeweather/resources/NWS-ARC%20Revised%20Joint%20Statement%20on%20Tornado%20Safety_062209.pdf